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While possessing great professional ability, and profound technical knowledge, he was a very genial and also a very conscientious and modest man, and one who won the admiration and regard of all who came in contact with him.

In closing, I must make my acknowledgments to Professor F. R. Hutton, who has kindly furnished me with most of the facts from which to compose this short paper.

1893.

GAETANO LANZA.

GEORGE VASEY.

GEORGE VASEY, for many years Chief Botanist in the Department of Agriculture, died at his home in Washington, March 4, 1893. His illness was of brief duration, and although he had attained an advanced age, he was until several days before his death exceptionally regular in performing the arduous and time-consuming duties of his position. His work entailed a wide correspondence, and it was thus that many botanists throughout the country and abroad came to appreciate his kind assistance. His letters, however, were chiefly of a professional nature, and many of his colleagues knew little or nothing of his personal history.

Born near Scarborough, England, February 28, 1822, he was brought in early childhood by his parents to Western New York, where the family settled at Oriskany, Oneida County, not far from the birthplace of Asa Gray. George Vasey, being one of a large family in humble circumstances, received only a meagre schooling, and at the age of twelve began work in a store. He early became interested in the plants of the region, and derived his first botanical knowledge of them from Mrs. Lincoln's *Botany*, a little volume of quaint diction, now almost forgotten. So anxious was he to possess this work, that, not being able to buy it, he copied the text entire. His botanical interest soon attracted the attention of Dr. Knieskern, who brought him to the notice of Professors Torrey and Gray. Having begun the study of medicine at the age of twenty-one, and having been graduated from the Berkshire Medical Institute at Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1846, Dr. Vasey removed in 1848 to Illinois, where he spent eighteen years in the practice of medicine, chiefly at Ringwood and Elgin. Here he had an excellent opportunity to observe the rich prairie vegetation, and made extensive collections, which have a high historic value, since they show the native flora before it had been so greatly impaired and displaced by the present exhaustive cultiva-

tion of the prairie lands and drainage of the numerous and extensive marshes. During his residence in Illinois, Dr. Vasey was influential in encouraging scientific observation, and in organizing the Illinois Natural History Society, of which he was made first President. He certainly did as much as any one to make Illinois botanically one of the best known States of the Union.

In 1868, partly from scientific interests, partly for financial reasons, he accepted the position of Botanist upon Major Powell's Colorado Expedition. Soon after his return to Illinois he was made Curator of the Natural History Museum of the State Normal University. April 1, 1872, he was appointed Chief Botanist of the Department of Agriculture, and Curator of the National Herbarium under the Smithsonian Institution. At that time the national botanical collections consisted largely of copious but little organized material, which had been brought in by numerous official surveys and exploring expeditions. This material was of the highest value, containing hundreds of types; but the immense labor of sorting and identifying it can only be appreciated by those who have had practical experience in herbarium work. The present rich and well organized government herbaria form accordingly the best memorial of Dr. Vasey's untiring efforts and wise administration. Not only has he greatly developed these collections and the libraries connected with them, but by securing an able corps of assistants has much increased the importance and value of the regular botanical publications of the government. A complete list of his own numerous and useful contributions to American Botany has recently been published,* so that only their general character need here be indicated. His earlier writings were mostly short articles upon various botanical subjects published in the "American Entomologist and Botanist," of which he was at one time associate editor. With his appointment in the Department of Agriculture his facilities for research were much increased, and his publications became more copious and important. Owing to the high agricultural importance of the Grasses, he concentrated his attention more and more upon this group of plants, studying not only their obscure systematic relations, but their economic qualities as well. Most important among his papers upon this Order are his bulletin upon the Agricultural Grasses of the United States, published in 1884, and his Illustrations of North American Grasses, a part of which was still in press at the time of his death.

* Botanical Gazette, XVIII. 176.

Dr. Vasey was twice married, and was exceptionally happy in his domestic life. He leaves a family of six children. His personal manner was singularly gentle, and even his purely professional acquaintances early recognized his warmth of heart and kindly disposition. In the autumn before his death he represented the Smithsonian Institution at the International Congress of Botanists in Genoa, where he was made one of the Vice-Presidents.

1893.

B. L. ROBINSON.

FOREIGN HONORARY MEMBERS.

SIR WILLIAM BOWMAN.

SIR WILLIAM BOWMAN, Baronet, of London, England, Fellow of the Royal Society, — one of the most distinguished of the Foreign Honorary Members of the Academy, — was born at Nantwich, England, in 1816. His father devoted much of his leisure to studies in natural history; and the son inherited this taste, and the habit of minute and careful observation which marked each step of his career, impressing the stamp of exactitude upon all his researches and conclusions. While a pupil at the Birmingham Hospital, at seventeen years of age, he wrote several monographs of much merit, one of which, "On Affections of the Larynx," published with colored illustrations, was received with great favor, and is still regarded as a very valuable production. His whole life fulfilled its early promise in intelligent and discriminating research; and he well knew how to discern and interpret what was of value as a positive addition to science, and a means for its further advancement.

At twenty-three years of age we find him Demonstrator of Anatomy at King's College Hospital in London, where he devoted himself to minute researches as to the finer structures of the human system, and to histological teaching, especially that kind of histology which is imperatively necessary to the understanding of function.

The following year he visited the hospitals of Paris, and of Austria, Germany, and Holland. On his return he was appointed the Assistant, and became afterwards the successor, of the distinguished investigator, Dr. Todd, with the title of Professor of